

Claim 11 has been amended to delete an extraneous comma.

Claim 20 has been amended similarly to claim 11 with regard to the extraneous comma. In addition, claim 20 has been amended to further recite the fact that when the singles stick is in its locked collapsed position it has a combined length that is short enough to fit within a tennis player's equipment bag.

As pointed out to the Examiners during the telephonic interview, the prior art rejections in this case are particularly based on hindsight and not, as required, on the teachings of the prior art. While various prior art references might individually teach this component or that component of the invention, none teach or suggest the overall claimed combination. The sheer number of references used in the rejection, along with the fact that secondary references are being modified to support the rejection, all point to the fact that hindsight is guiding the Examiner in which components to pull out of which references. This is not permissible.

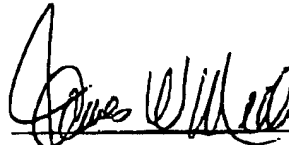
With respect to claim 11, a telescopic singles stick is being claimed having a biased lock that "automatically move(s) into a locking engagement with the telescopic sections whenever the telescopic sections are placed in their extended position." Such a lock is not properly taught for use in a singles stick by any reference of record. The overall claimed combination is simply not suggested by the combined teachings of the art. In addition, the details provided in the dependent claims, such as the spring finger of claim 7, are further not suggested. Accordingly, claim 11 and the claims dependent therefrom are believed to be allowable.

Claim 20 has been amended to further recite the length of the singles stick in its locked collapsed position, name-

ly a length which "is short enough to allow the singles stick to be stored in a tennis player's equipment bag which bag is sized to be at least slightly longer than a tennis racket." The references of record do not fairly teach or suggest a singles stick that can be locked in an extended position using a pin and a first hole with the length in this position being long enough to raise the tennis net for singles play and which can also be locked in a collapsed position, again using the pin and a second hole, with the length in this position being short enough to fit into a tennis player's equipment bag. Accordingly, claim 20 and the claims dependent therefrom are also allowable.

All of the claims remaining in this application are believed to clearly define over the prior art of record. Accordingly, prompt reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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James W. Miller  
Registration No. 27,661  
Suite 1005  
Foshay Tower  
871 Marquette Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Telephone (612) 338-5915

Marked Up Version of Amended Claim 6

6. (Twice Amended) The singles stick of claim [1]11, wherein the lock comprises a locking pin that may be inserted through [various ones of spaced holes]at least one hole.

Marked Up Version of Amended Claim 7

7. (Once Amended) The singles stick of claim 6, wherein the locking pin is carried on a spring finger connected to one of the base and staff, the spring finger having a bias tending to engage the locking pin with the at least one [of the spaced] hole[s] when the at least one hole is aligned with the locking pin.

Marked Up Version of Amended Claim 10

10. (Once Amended) The singles stick of claim [1]11, wherein the base and staff have a combined length in the collapsed position which is short enough to allow the singles stick to be stored in a tennis player's equipment bag [that]which bag is sized to be at least slightly longer than a tennis racket.

Marked Up Version of Amended Claim 11

11. (Thrice Amended) A singles stick for holding the top edge of a tennis net at its regulation height above the ground for singles play,[ ,] which comprises:

(a) a plurality of telescopically received sections including at least one first, hollow section into which a second section is telescopically received such that the first and second sections can be extended between an extended orientation and a collapsed orientation by telescoping the first and second sections relative to one another;

(b) a lock for releasably holding the telescopic sections together in at least the extended position, wherein the lock is responsive to movement of the telescopic sections with the lock being biased to automatically move into a locking engagement with the telescopic sections whenever the telescopic sections are placed in their extended position; and

(c) wherein the combined length of the telescopic sections in the locked extended position thereof is sufficiently long to permit the telescopic sections to be wedged between a top support cord or cable of a tennis net with the telescopic sections being held in place solely by downward force from the top support cord or cable forcing the telescopic sections into engagement with the ground, and wherein the telescopic sections can be wedged between the top support cord or cable and the ground at a location between a singles line and doubles line on one side of a tennis court and when so wedged the combined length of the telescopic sections will raise the top support cord or cable of the tennis net by an amount required to provide a height that conforms to singles play rules.

Marked Up Version of Amended Claim 20

20. (Twice Amended) A singles stick for holding the top edge of a tennis net at its regulation height above the ground for singles play, [ , ] which comprises:

(a) a base and a staff which are slidably and telescopically connected to one another such that the base and staff can be extended between an extended position and a collapsed position by sliding the base and staff relative to one another, wherein the base and staff have mating non-circular cross-sectional configurations to prevent the base and staff from rotating relative to one another;

(b) a lock for releasably holding the base and staff together in both the extended and collapsed positions, the lock comprising first and second vertically spaced holes which receive a locking pin with the locking pin releasably holding the base and staff together in the extended and collapsed positions thereof depending upon which of the first and second vertically spaced holes receives the locking pin; [and]

(c) wherein the combined length of the base and staff in the locked extended position thereof is sufficiently long to permit the base and staff to be wedged between a top support cord or cable of a tennis net with the base and staff being held in place solely by downward force from the top support cord or cable forcing the base and staff into engagement with the ground, and wherein the base and staff can be wedged between the top support cord or cable and the ground at a location between a singles line and doubles line on one side of a tennis court and when so wedged the combined length of the base and staff will raise the top support cord or cable of the tennis net by an amount required to provide a height that conforms to singles play rules; and

(d) wherein the combined length of the base and staff in the locked collapsed position thereof is short enough to allow the singles stick to be stored in a tennis player's equipment bag which bag is sized to be at least slightly longer than a tennis racket.